

CONFIDENTIAL

A. PROBLEM

To maximize the utility and scope of coverage of Key Personalities.

B. DISCUSSION

Of all the areas of national activity examined in the NIS, the KP--as an original or maintenance section--is unique. It is unique in concept in that it endeavors to supply basic intelligence on the most ephemeral aspect of national life--the people who currently occupy positions of leadership and influence. It is unique in content, in that it deals not with relatively permanent physical features or broad-based social, economic and political institutions, but with a number of individual personalities who act and react differently in response to constantly shifting personal, partisan, national and international pressures. It is unique in usefulness, in that the "basic" forces operating in any national situation cannot be understood or influenced except in terms of our knowledge and understanding of the key personalities who direct and articulate them.

The numerous commendations received from consumers in all agencies attest to the value of the KP and to its success in fulfilling its unique mission. It has clearly demonstrated its usefulness as an intelligence product, fully meriting the time and effort expended on it and indeed deserving of an even greater expenditure of resources than is possible under existing staff and funding availabilities. At the same time, however, there is a growing feeling among all consumer agencies that the procedures now governing its preparation, publication and dissemination, procedures which fail to take into account its unique character, impose upon the KP serious limitations in utility and scope.

The principal defects of the KP are its rapid obsolescence and the absence of an effective method for arresting or controlling the obsolescence rate. The KP is admittedly not intended to fill current intelligence needs and makes no attempt to do so. It is evident, however, that if it is to provide meaningful basic intelligence it must be kept reasonably current and relevant. Even in the most static leadership situations (and these are the exception rather than the rule) its validity is constantly being affected; if nothing else, the passage of time and the rapid pace of events alter the frame of reference against which a particular leader or leadership group must be evaluated. The prescribed method of coping with this situation and for keeping the leadership picture in reasonably current focus is the KP Maintenance Project. "Maintenance" in this sense is a misnomer; what is in fact required is a complete re-write of the KP. In practice if not in concept the KP is committed to an "all or nothing at all" approach. No provision is made in the between-maintenance periods for revising individual studies to reflect important developments in the careers or attitudes of established leaders or for including new significant personalities. If, as usually happens, these periods are

CONFIDENTIAL

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

CONFIDENTIAL

2

protracted, the experienced country specialist resorts less and less frequently to the KP as a source of information, while the non-specialist who turns to it is disappointed or, conceivably, misled.

Accentuating the obsolescence factor is the treatment of the KP, in its drafting and printing stages, as a totally integrated study, with every man in his place and a place for every man. In the drafting phase integration is achieved by establishing a cut-off date on information (usually two to four months, but occasionally six months, prior to submission to CIA for final review) and rigorously excluding any developments that occur thereafter. The publication of the KP volume, which must compete for printing priorities with other NIS sections, may not be completed for another year. What emerges is a sharply focussed still photograph of a country's leadership snapped at a particular point of time, usually from 12 to 18 months before distribution. This process is not without certain advantages. By freezing the picture, the analyst is able to examine in detail the intricate skein of relationships among the leaders and to place each of them on the appropriate rung of the leadership ladder. For the historian, this is enlightening and rewarding. One may ask, however, whether the KP (and the NIS in general) is addressed primarily to the historian or to the policy-planner and operational planning officer who relies on the NIS for basic intelligence. For the latter, a less sharply defined but continuous moving picture running three or even six months late might well be preferable to a perfectly focussed five-year old group snapshot.

Another limitation inherent in existing procedures relates to the scope of coverage. In the twelve years since the KP program was instituted, initial studies (Section 59) have been completed on 69 NIS areas, and maintenance projects on 16 of these. Thirty-five areas have yet to be brought under KP coverage. Of the KP's (original or maintenance) produced, 44 have been published and distributed within the past five years (from 1955 on). Hence of the total NIS areas, 76 still require KP studies or have had KP studies prepared which are seriously, if not hopelessly, out of date. This does not take into account the fact that major developments have rendered a number of "recent" KP's (i.e., Hungary, Sudan) out of date. Given BI's staffing pattern, which allows for the production of no more than 8 KP's annually, the situation promises to become increasingly worse rather than better so long as current procedures remain in effect.

Currently under consideration is a proposal that the problem of NIS obsolescence be overcome by establishing a four or five year maintenance cycle for a selected list of countries and that the NIS effort be wholly concentrated on these country priorities. This would mean restricting KP coverage to 32 or at the very most 40 NIS areas. The wisdom of

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

3

ignoring large portions of the world--including the newly independent countries of Africa and all of Latin America--in which the U.S. has important and increasing interests could be argued at length. But, so far as the KP is concerned, this proposal offers only a limited solution to the problems we have earlier noted. The completed KP will still be one year to eighteen months out of date when distributed, it will still be subject to a high rate of obsolescence, it will still lack flexibility in the between-maintenance periods, and in the latter years if not the greater part of its effective life it will still present an unrealistic and possibly misleading picture of a nation's leadership.

An alternative suggestion, which would avoid these pitfalls and at the same time broaden rather than limit the scope of coverage, is outlined below. It is intended to apply only to the KP, in recognition of the unique nature of this volume and the specific needs the KP is designed to fill. It is strongly urged that these recommendations be given full and careful consideration.

#### G. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Treat the KP as a continuing project, as a collection of individual biographies any of which may be revised without requiring a complete re-write and re-publication of the volume.
2. Treat each biography as a separate entity, each bearing the date of preparation and the name of the contributing agency.
3. Restrict revisions to significant changes or to a meaningful accumulation of minor changes.
4. For the convenience of the consumer and to reduce drafting time, authorize the use of captions in the biography format.
5. Omit the introduction to the KP and incorporate the comment carried therein in other appropriate NIS Sections.
6. For the convenience of end-users, issue on an annual or "as needed" basis a directory, similar to that prepared for the NIS annual, which would form part of the KP volume and would be desirable to retain in series. Consideration should also be given to including in the volume a front-page sheet on which to record changes as received and, in the case of the more voluminous KP's, an alphabetical index with sufficient space under each letter to list new entries.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

4

7. In view of the fact that the KP will consist of separate biographies, examine the need for continuing existing classification specifications.

8. In recognition of the KP's distinctive character, consider issuing it in distinctive size and bindings.

D. JUSTIFICATION

The procedures proposed above would convert the KP from a historical to a living document which could serve indefinitely as a source of reasonably up-to-date basic intelligence. KP volumes issued under this procedure would have the initial advantage of not being bound by arbitrary uniform cut-off dates; since each biography would be independent of the others and separately dated, major developments occurring between the writing and publication could be entered, and obvious anachronisms, which tend to discredit the volume, deleted. Once the basic volume is issued, new or revised biographies would be prepared as required. This would minimize NIS printing jams and permit more effective use of editorial and printing resources. (With respect to the reproduction methods employed, it would be well to explore the desirability of shifting to multi-lith or some other non-type-setting method.) A further advantage will accrue from the fact that as biographies are issued they will be a constant reminder to consumers of the existence and utility of the KP and will stimulate the submission of information and criticism, on both individual reports and the KP's usefulness in general.

To bring all KP's immediately into line with the procedure is manifestly impossible, given the magnitude of the task. What is suggested however is that all KP's henceforth produced be issued in the form proposed. This involves no increase in work-load and may well reduce it considerably. Two methods of scheduling under the new procedure should be considered:

(a) Follow the "priority list" scheme, preparing complete up-to-date "new-form" KP's on the countries topping the list and gradually working down to the bottom. As a "new form" KP is issued on a country, it will be brought under the continuance maintenance procedure. By this arrangement, initial "new form" biographical studies on all NIS areas of KP significance will have been issued by 1975; thereafter all will be on maintenance.

(b) Schedule, over the next four or five years, the production of "new form" KP's on all NIS areas, each volume to be restricted initially to a "core group" of leaders--normally no more than 25 in number, but in special cases, such as the USSR and Communist China and perhaps India [REDACTED] up to 50 or 75. Around this core group a

25X6

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

5

full-scale structure of leadership biographies will gradually be erected. The continuous maintenance process will be applied to each KP volume from the beginning.

Either method will permit of an annual KP production of some 1500 biographies--new and revised. This is equivalent to the current 8-section annual requirement and is within the capabilities of BI's current personnel strength. To the extent that BI's full resources can be brought to play on KP production, rather than, as under current procedures, concentrating the efforts of only selected area specialists, the 1500 figure should be regarded as a minimum estimate. Actual production could well exceed 2000.

Moreover, in terms of BI's operations and target areas, the "new form" KP will permit greater flexibility and maneuverability in scheduling. Biographic requirements arising out of major international developments or national crises can be met without diminishing NIS output, and the biographies produced will be more meaningful and useful.

RFB:BI

August 6, 1959

CONFIDENTIAL